

**Michigan Supreme Court
State Court Administrative Office**
309 N. Washington Square, P.O. Box 30048
Lansing, Michigan 48909
(517) 373-2222 TEL
(517) 373-2112 FAX
Email Ferryj@Jud.state.mi.us
John D. Ferry, Jr., State Court Administrator

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TO: Chief Circuit and Probate Judges, Family Division Presiding Judges
cc: Friends of the Court, Family Division Administrators, Circuit Court Administrators

FROM: John D. Ferry, Jr.

SUBJ: SCAO Administrative Memorandum 2002-10; Converting Support Orders to Monthly Amounts

MCL 552.625C requires the State Court Administrative Office to establish a formula to convert child support to monthly amounts. This policy establishes the formula as required by the statute. If you have questions concerning this formula, please contact Ron Kollen or Steve Capps at (517) 373-5975.

A. Methodology.

The formula must convert weekly and bi-weekly orders to monthly orders. Consequently, the formula will be developed by determining the average number of days in a month, and dividing that number by 7 to determine the average number of weeks in a month.

The number of days in a month can vary from 28 days to 31 days. Although there are 365 days in a standard year, one additional day is added every fourth year.¹ As a result, various formulas can be constructed to convert weekly orders into monthly orders. The method that will most accurately convert any single order will vary dependent on the time-frame for which the calculation is made.

Dividing the 365 days in a standard year by 12 establishes a slightly lower average number of days in a month than will be true for periods containing a leap year, i.e., a year

¹ Except for each millennium year, each 100th year does not add the extra day. This exception is excluded from consideration because the time frame in which the conversion will have application will not include a 100th year.

with 366 days. Years with 365 days contain an average of 30.42 days in each month (4.35 weeks). Years with 366 days contain an average of 30.5 days in each month (4.36 weeks). Since at most one year in four has 366 days, the average number of weeks in a month over any extended period of time will more closely approximate the number of weeks in a 365 day year.²

The SCAO adopts 4.35 as the multiplier to convert weekly orders to monthly orders.

Until the Michigan Child Support Enforcement System computer program converts orders to monthly charge in a particular friend of the court office, the conversion formula for that friend of the court office is the amount calculated by multiplying the number of charge dates in a month by the weekly support amount.³ Although this amount will vary from month to month, the variances will be adjusted out by the proration used when the conversion formula is applied.

Courts occasionally enter semi-annual or annual orders for fixed portions of the support order which are due on a date certain. For example, if the parties have children at a private school, in addition to the regular monthly amounts, the court may order a single payment to cover part of tuition. The conversion formula contained within this policy is not intended to address those types of situations.

B. Conversion Formula.

Charge Cycle	Mathematical Function	Factor
Weekly	Multiply (x)	4.35
Biweekly	Multiply (x)	2.175
Semi-monthly	Multiply (x)	2

C. Per Diem Conversion Formula.

At the time of conversion, some orders will have a charge date other than the first day of the month. Consequently, a charge occurring in the previous month will cover a portion of the month where support is converted to a monthly amount. The portion previously

² Rounding to the nearest hundredth, any period containing at least one year of 365 days will have an average of 4.35 weeks.

³ This is the method presently used in Michigan to determine the amounts to be distributed as current support. The amount of support due is the same whether this formula is used or the order is converted using the formula established by this policy. There is a slight difference in how distribution occurs and when enforcement is appropriate. Friend of the court offices should convert orders manually when they observe significant issues occurring because of the delay.

charged must be determined and subtracted from the payer's obligation to avoid a double charge to the payer.

1. Adjustments for Orders based on Weekly Charges (weekly and bi-weekly).

When a case has a weekly order, the order amount should be divided by 7⁴ and multiplied times the number of days falling within the first month converted to a monthly charge. For example, if a payer has a \$70 per week support obligation, and the obligation is charged 3 days before the month in which support is converted to a monthly obligation, the amount to be subtracted from the new monthly obligation would be calculated by dividing \$70 by 7 and multiplying by 4⁵ (i.e., \$40).

2. Adjustments for Orders Based on Monthly Charges (monthly and semi-monthly).

When an order is based on a factor of a monthly amount and the first charge date is on the first day of the month, the conversion is a simple multiplication to determine how much is required to be paid in the month. If the order charges on a day other than the first day of the month, it will be necessary to apply a conversion formula to reset the charge date as the first day of the month.

Using the same assumptions for the number of days in the year as used for converting to monthly amounts, each year will have 365 days. Dividing the days in a year by 12 produces the average number of days in a month. Dividing one day by that result produces the average value for one day, i.e., .033.⁶ The proration should be accomplished by multiplying the monthly support amount by .033, and multiplying that amount by the number of days in the month of conversion for which support has previously been charged and subtracting the amount from the first month's charge.

D. Duration of Conversion Formula.

This formula is developed for the initial conversion. However, the new statute requires the monthly amount to be prorated at the beginning and end of the order. See MCL 552.625C (1). The formula established by this memorandum should be used for the proration of the beginning periods of new orders, and ending periods of orders where the obligation ceases, until a proration formula is incorporated into the Michigan Child Support Formula Manual.

⁴ For bi-weekly orders, the obligation would be divided by 14.

⁵ The number of days from the last weekly charge which are in the month converted to a monthly charge.

⁶ Rounding to the nearest thousandth, the same result occurs regardless of whether the days in a year are determined to be 365, 366, or some real number in between.